



Congresswoman Louise M. Slaughter

New York's 28th Congressional District

Biography

As one of the most powerful women in the U.S. House of Representatives, Congresswoman Louise McIntosh Slaughter has achieved a significant level of leadership as the second ranking Democrat on the influential House Rules Committee and as the Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Legislative and Budget Process. Recently, she was tapped to serve on the newly created Select Committee on Homeland Security, serving as the Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Rules and sitting on the Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security. She is the Democratic Chair of three very prominent congressional caucuses: the Arts, Women's, and Pro-Choice Caucuses.

Rep. Slaughter is currently serving her ninth term in Congress as Representative of the 28th Congressional District of New York State. Her diverse district includes the cities of Rochester, Buffalo, and Niagara Falls. Known as a strong proponent of progressive causes, as well as a fighter for the employment concerns and the economic development of Western New York, Rep. Slaughter has earned a reputation for her dedication to constituent service.

A tireless promoter of small businesses, Rep. Slaughter regularly holds conferences to help remove the barriers to capital and federal contracts. She was responsible for the enactment of permanent tax initiatives for the creation of new jobs in small and mid-size manufacturing firms.

Her fight to secure funding for local projects earned her the distinction of having the Rochester Institute of Technology name its Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies facility, "The Louise M. Slaughter Building." In addition, she has secured federal funding for High Technology of Rochester's business incubator, the Rochester Harbor Redevelopment Project (including the Fast Ferry), the Center for Optics Manufacturing, Rochester Institute of Technology's Remanufacturing and Resource Recovery Center, and the University of Rochester, which is expected to become Rochester's largest employer later this year.

A microbiologist with a master's degree in public health, she is intensely involved in health issues. She has authored cutting-edge legislation aimed at protecting consumers from discrimination by health insurance providers or employers based on genetic makeup. This widely supported bill would also protect the privacy of consumers' genetic information. Last year she was honored by the National Tay-Sachs and Allied Disorders Association with the "Public Conscience Award" for leadership on health care issues, including genetic discrimination.

Concerned about the high incidence of colorectal cancer among Americans, especially minorities, and the mistaken notion that colorectal cancer is primarily a “man’s disease,” Congresswoman Slaughter spearheaded a nationwide education and prevention campaign to wage war on this number two cancer killer. She introduced legislation that would require health insurance companies to cover preventive screening for colorectal cancer for all men and women over the age of 50, and for individuals under the age of 50 at high risk for the disease.

As one of the congressional leaders on women’s issues, Rep. Slaughter has won historic increases in funding for women’s health. She is responsible for passage of legislation that established the first federal research and education programs on DES, a drug mistakenly prescribed to pregnant women from 1938 to 1971 to prevent miscarriage. DES often caused deformities and other health problems in the reproductive systems of their children.

She fought for legislation guaranteeing that women and minorities are included in all federal health trials and establishing an Office of Research on Women’s Health at the National Institutes of Health. She has introduced a bill to direct the National Institutes of Health to fund up to six centers nationwide that would focus on women’s health and the environment. In 1997, she was awarded the American Public Health Association Distinguished Public Health Legislator Award.

A leading advocate of women’s rights, Rep. Slaughter succeeded in having her legislation to establish a Women’s Rights National Historic Trail enacted into law. In 1998, she was presented with the International Health Awareness Network Recognition Award for her lifelong commitment to women’s equality at an International Women’s Day Celebration at the United Nations.

Known by her colleagues as a staunch supporter of the arts, Rep. Slaughter led the successful fight last year in Congress to increase the budgets of the National Endowment of the Arts by \$10 millions and the National Endowment for the Humanities by \$5 million. Her efforts to generate congressional support for the arts was recognized in January 1998 when Rep. Slaughter received the Award for Outstanding Arts Leadership in the U.S. House of Representatives from the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Americans for the Arts.

During her sixteen years in Congress, Rep. Slaughter has won numerous awards for her leadership and dedication to public service. She was the first Member of Congress to receive the Sidney R. Yates National Arts Advocacy Award, presented by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Last year she was awarded the “Humane Legislator of the Year” by the American Humane Association. In January 1999, she was named, “Lay Educator of the Year” by the Rochester Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International, the professional fraternity for men and women in education.

Elected in 1986, Congresswoman Slaughter has a Bachelor of Science degree (1951) in Microbiology and a Master of Science degree (1953) in Public Health from the University of Kentucky. Prior to entering Congress, she served in the in the New York State Assembly (1982-86) and the Monroe County (N.Y.) Legislature (1976-79); and as regional coordinator to then-Secretary of State Mario Cuomo (1976-78) and to then-Lt. Gov. Mario Cuomo (1979-82).

A native of Harlan County, Kentucky, Congresswoman Slaughter has lived most of her life in Rochester’s suburb of Fairport. She is married to Robert Slaughter and has three daughters and seven grandchildren.